



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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Serial No.: 09/714,340) Group: 3721
Filed: 16 November 2000) Examiner: L.B. Tran
Title: SYSTEM AND APPARATUS FOR)
PACKAGING CONTAINERS)

AMENDMENT

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313

Dear Sir:

Applicants amend the subject application as shown starting at page 2
of this Amendment:

I hereby certify that this correspondence (along with any paper referred to as being attached or enclosed)
is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to:
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1. (Currently Amended) A system for packaging multiple generally cylindrical containers, the system comprising the steps of:

providing an applying machine having a drum with a plurality of jaw pairs, a transverse distance between the jaw pairs in a closed position adjustable around a circumference of the drum through an adjustable hub of the drum;

moving a carrier through ~~an~~ the applying machine, the carrier constructed of flexible plastic having a plurality of elongated apertures aligned in transverse ranks, which elongated apertures are oriented in a longitudinal direction of the carrier and have a longitudinal pitch between a center of each adjacent elongated aperture, the longitudinal pitch having a first length;

moving a plurality of containers through the applying machine, each container of the plurality of containers having a maximum diameter having a second length at least approximately 10% shorter than the first length and each container of the plurality of containers spaced at the first length apart from an adjacent container by the applying machine; and

positioning the carrier over the plurality of containers whereby each elongated aperture engages with one of the containers to form a package having a container pitch between a center of adjacent containers approximately equal to the second length.

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2. (Original) The system of Claim 1 wherein the elongated apertures, in an unstressed condition prior to application to the plurality of containers, are approximately four to six times longer than wide.

3. (Original) The system of Claim 1 wherein the carrier further comprises a plurality of relief holes positioned between adjacent longitudinal rows of elongated apertures.

4. (Original) The system of Claim 3 wherein longitudinal extremities of the relief holes overlap end portions of adjacent elongated apertures in the longitudinal direction.

5. (Original) The system of Claim 1 wherein the first length is approximately 3.0".

6. (Original) The system of Claim 5 wherein the second length is approximately 2.6".

7. (Original) The system of Claim 1 wherein the first length is approximately 1.15 times greater than the second length.

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8. (Original) The system of Claim 1 wherein an overall length of the carrier is reduced after the carrier is positioned over the plurality of containers to form a package.

9. (Currently Amended) An applying system for packaging multiple generally cylindrical containers in a carrier, each container having a height and a maximum diameter, the applying system comprising: an applying machine having a drum with a plurality of jaw pairs, a transverse distance between the jaw pairs in a closed position adjustable around a circumference of the drum through an adjustable hub of the drum, the applying machine accommodating a plurality of containers spaced at intervals by the applying machine and the carrier having adjacent longitudinal rows of elongated apertures with a longitudinal pitch between each elongated aperture having a first length that is greater than the maximum diameter and, after application to the plurality of containers juxtaposed relative to one another, the container pitch between adjacent containers within the carrier is a second length, at least approximately 10% less than the first length and approximately equal to the maximum diameter.

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10. (Original) The applying system of Claim 9 wherein the carrier further comprises a plurality of relief holes positioned between adjacent longitudinal rows of elongated apertures.

11. (Original) The system of Claim 9 wherein the first length is approximately 3.0".

12. (Original) The system of Claim 9 wherein the second length is approximately 2.6".

13. (Original) The system of Claim 9 wherein the first length is approximately 1.15 times greater than the second length.

19. (New) A system for packaging multiple generally cylindrical containers with an applying machine, the system comprising the steps of:

moving a carrier through the applying machine, the carrier constructed of flexible plastic having a plurality of elongated apertures aligned in transverse ranks, which elongated apertures are oriented in a longitudinal direction of the carrier and have a fixed longitudinal pitch between a center of each adjacent

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elongated aperture independent of a diameter size of the containers, wherein for small diameter containers the elongated apertures are narrower than the elongated apertures for large diameter containers;

providing the applying machine with a drum having a plurality of jaw pairs spaced about a circumference of the drum, with a circumferential distance between a jaw pair and an adjacent jaw pair equal to the fixed longitudinal pitch and a transverse distance between the jaw pairs in a closed position adjustable around the circumference of the drum through an adjustable hub of the drum;

moving a plurality of containers through the applying machine, wherein the transverse distance between jaw pairs in the closed position is narrower for the small diameter containers than the transverse distance between jaw pairs for the large diameter containers; and

positioning the carrier over the plurality of containers whereby each elongated aperture engages with one of the containers to form a package so that a single applying machine is adapted for use in connection with both small diameter containers and large diameter containers.

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20. (New) The system of Claim 19 wherein a length of the package is shorter for small diameter containers than the length of the package for large diameter containers.

21. (New) The system of Claim 19 wherein for small diameter containers the carrier is narrower than the carrier for large diameter containers.

22. (New) The system of Claim 19 wherein the fixed longitudinal pitch is approximately 3.0" and the diameter of the containers is approximately 2.6".

23. (New) The system of Claim 19 wherein the fixed longitudinal pitch is approximately 3.0" and the diameter of the containers is approximately 2.4".